

THE
MONROE
EVENING

Times

Friday, December 2, 1994

'About time' for new

Local man also
investigating '63
assassination of
U.S. president

By **TERJE LANGELAND**
Monroe Evening Times

When Neal Trickel of Monroe recently learned there is a new federal investigation into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, he thought, "about time."

Trickel, 40, has been studying the murder since the 1970s, and has discovered evidence he says disproves the official Warren Commission report released in 1964. His evidence, he says, shows a second gunman was involved, meaning a conspiracy to murder the president took place.

Kennedy was assassinated Nov. 22, 1963 while riding in the backseat of a convertible during a motorcade in Dallas.

A gun expert and a medical technologist at Freeport Memorial Hospital, Trickel has long been interested in murder cases. He started studying the JFK mystery when he bought a box of materials from a retiring criminologist containing photos, articles and documents relating to the case.

"As my interest grew," Trickel recalls, "I began to feel that somewhere among those boxes, maybe the answer to what really happened could be found."

Trickel says the JFK investigation was a "mess," and that normal forensic procedures were ignored.

"Somewhere, something had to have been

JFK probe

overlooked," he says. "Something that could tell what really happened ... When digging through one of the boxes, I found what I had been looking for."

What Trickel found was a photograph of evidence from the assassination, showing items such as Oswald's rifle, revolver and shirt. Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry took the photo before handing over the evidence to the FBI.

The photo's existence has long been known, but what caught Trickel's attention was a tiny object that Curry had identified as a "metal fragment from the arm of Gov. Connally." Texas Gov. John Connally, who rode



Times photo/TERJE LANGE LAND

EVIDENCE OF CONSPIRACY — Neal Trickel, 40, of Monroe shows a photograph he says contains evidence of a conspiracy to kill President John F. Kennedy in November 1963. The rifle, a Carcano, is of the same kind Lee Harvey Oswald, allegedly used to shoot the president.

in front of Kennedy in the motorcade, was also shot during the assassination.

Trickel enlarged the photo and found that the object was a bullet jacket missing the lead core.

The Warren report states that only three bullets were fired, all by Lee Harvey Oswald, using a Carcano rifle. A film by bystander Abraham Zapruder shows all shots were fired within eight seconds. Oswald could not have fired more than three shots in that time, due to the rough action of the Carcano. Therefore, the existence of more than three bullets would prove a second gunman was involved.

The problem for the Warren Commission was this: One bullet missed entirely, hitting the pavement. The bullet that hit the presi-

dent's head fragmented in his skull. That left one bullet to account for the wounds to the president's torso and Connally's chest, arm, and leg, plus bullet fragments in the car.

The commission's solution was "the magic bullet theory." According to the theory, one bullet hit Kennedy's back, came out his chest, hit Connally in the back and came out his chest, then hit Connally's arm and went on to hit his leg.

The "magic bullet" was found on a stretcher in the hospital afterward, remarkably intact, and was traced to the Carcano that Oswald allegedly used.

Two days after the assassination, Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby shot and killed Oswald while millions were watching on national television.

If the bullet that caused all the wounds to Connally was intact, "what then, is the metal fragment a piece of?" Trickel asks.

Trickel is convinced the fragment stems from a fourth shot, proving a second gunman existed.

Like other critics, Trickel does not believe the magic bullet theory. He says the fragment is one of at least two bullets that hit Connally.

First, he does not believe Kennedy and Connally were aligned in a way that one bullet could have caused all the wounds. Second, a "Carcano" bullet hitting Connally's chest would have fragmented, he says, but the magic bullet was intact.

Trickel bought a Carcano rifle a few years

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ago and has been experimenting with shooting different objects with the type of ammunition Oswald allegedly used. In all cases, the bullets were deformed after impact.

"It has convinced me the magic bullet was a plant," he says. The fact that the magic bullet was actually proven to come from the rifle Oswald allegedly used only strengthens his belief in a plot.

Although the fragment from Connally's arm is clearly present in the photograph, it was never mentioned in the Warren report. And although Trickel finds it hard to believe no one has noticed the fragment, he has never heard anyone bring it up before.

"I haven't seen it mentioned anywhere else," he says.

If the magic bullet was indeed planted, could the fragment be one of only three shots total, all fired by Oswald?

The fragment, Trickel says, could not account for all of Connally's wounds, and other holes in the Warren report make the possibility highly unlikely.

Like many others, Trickel does not believe Kennedy was shot from the back, as must have been the case if Oswald acted alone from the Texas State School Book Depository's sixth floor.

Judging from the size and position of the bullet fragments in Kennedy's brain, as described in the autopsy report, Trickel draws two conclusions: one, the bullet that hit Kennedy's head was shot from the front, and two, a Carcano bullet could not have caused the wound.

"A Carcano bullet would not break up this way," Trickel says. "It is clear that the president was killed with a bullet that had a smaller caliber, and higher velocity than the 6.5 Carcano round."

Unfortunately, that is hard to prove, as Kennedy's brain "disappeared" from the national archives, he says. Also, spectrographic analysis of the bullet fragments in the brain

have not been made public.

Furthermore, Trickel's experiments with the Carcano support claims that it is almost impossible to fire three shots with the rifle in eight seconds and hitting a moving target 88 yards away twice.

Evidence, or lack thereof, has Trickel doubting whether Oswald ever shot at the president at all.

"Factually, there is nothing that can tie him," he says.

Oswald supposedly carried the Carcano rifle into the depository in a paper bag. A neighbor who saw Oswald carry the bag that day said he had it under his arm, with one end cupped in his hand. Oswald said the bag contained curtain rods.

Trickel took apart a Carcano and found that its parts were too long to fit underneath an arm, "unless you're built like an ape." He also examined standard curtain rods from the time and found them to be of a more fitting length.

"That's what he had," Trickel says. "Curtain rods."

Witnesses have said they saw Oswald on the street at the time of Kennedy's shooting. In addition, Vanity Fair recently reported the FBI has admitted after 30 years to finding another gun at the murder scene, a Smith & Wesson handgun. Also, witnesses say Deputy Roger Craig found a 7.65 Mauser rifle on the depository's sixth floor. Craig was murdered while investigating the case.

There are still other aspects of the JFK mystery that have Trickel suspicious. He says he will continue to study the case, even though friends ask him why he is "wasting his time" on something that happened 30 years ago.

Trickel responds that it is not just about one case. He is concerned that political assassinations in general have become acceptable. With the FBI covering up the JFK case, "what about Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy?" he asks.

He also points out that the investigation of White House aide Vincent Foster's recent death is classified.

"It didn't end 30 years ago," he says.